



# Attacks from the Air:

Airstrikes Perpetrated by the Military Junta in Northern Shan State,  
Kachin State and Karenni State in November 2024



## Introduction

This briefing paper by the Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND-Burma) will analyze the impact of the airstrikes perpetrated against innocent civilians by the military junta in Northern Shan State, Kachin State and Karenni State throughout November 2024.

Desk research compiled by ND-Burma in English and Burmese, combined with data from our members, found twenty-five incidents of airstrikes took place in November in these specific areas, leading to 25 adults killed and ten children, 74 wounded, including 23 adults and 51 children. There were at least 77 damaged properties, including a church, monastery, hospital, tea shop, five office buildings, and six vehicles.

ND-Burma has several members operating on the ground in the locations included in this analysis, including the Pa-O Youth Organization, the Kachin Women's Association Thailand and the Ta'ang Students and Youth Union. Of the twenty-five cases, fourteen were also documented by ND-Burma organizations. Their ongoing documentation efforts are critical to collecting further evidence needed to hold the military junta accountable for its crimes.

The deployment of the airstrikes has resulted in many long-term challenges for those targeted, including a lack of adequate shelter, food and medical supplies. The worsening offensives have also led to obstacles in the safe delivery and provision of humanitarian assistance, which the military routinely attempts to intercept and sabotage.

The junta deliberately denies urgently needed aid to the communities they have bombed, both aerially and in on-the-ground attacks. Concerning the vast majority of attacks on civilians, especially from the air, the military regime is the perpetrator of these attacks.

Airstrikes are frequently carried out late at night and early in the morning when there is little warning or time to flee. The junta has violently targeted displaced populations in temporary



shelters, internal displacement camps, homes, villages, schools, places of worship, and clinics. Survivors have expressed anxiety, trauma and suffering over the uncertainty and indiscriminate nature of the targeted assaults against them.

The junta has also destroyed entire livelihoods as villages are devastated from the skies. What food, livestock, and materials remain are often raided by military forces in the aftermath of their attacks. The ongoing suffering and plight of civilians have worsened due to the lack of a coordinated and urgent response by the international community.



## Background

After ten years of a slow but steady transition to a democratic civilian government, the Burma Army attempted a coup in the early morning hours of 1 February 2021. Their actions resulted in the unlawful detention and arrest of political leaders and activists, as well as a rapidly deteriorating human rights crisis that has seen unprecedented levels of internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the country, who have been repeatedly forced to flee their villages due to the junta's indiscriminate attacks.

Before the 2021 coup, there were approximately [330,000 IDPs](#) in Burma. That number has now soared to more than [3 million displaced people, among which 40% are children](#). Civilians have borne the brunt of the devastating violence, which includes the indiscriminate firing of artillery, mortar shells, and airstrikes by the junta.

There is no guarantee of safety or survival for communities that hear junta-deployed planes hovering above. Women, children, and the elderly—who are among the most vulnerable in conflict-affected groups—are left without protection during these aerial bombardments. Those who survive are left traumatized in the aftermath of these catastrophic attacks.

During the first four months of 2024, airstrikes [killed more than 359 civilians](#), including 61 children, and injured 756 others. The airstrikes have directly resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of IDPs and war-affected refugees living in temporary shelters and camps along Burma's various borders and areas controlled by Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs).

The surge in attacks is coming out of the junta's desperation.

As the military loses soldiers, townships, and hundreds of outposts and bases at an unprecedented rate, they are retaliating against the civilian population with vicious intent.

It is important to reiterate that the junta is not just targeting armed resistance groups. The military is aggressively destroying hospitals, religious buildings and schools. Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica, an independent research group, [documented](#) nearly 450 airstrikes on these types of infrastructure since the coup. They also reported more than 3,290 airstrikes across the country, which have killed at least 1,700 people. Other local human rights organizations are reporting similar findings.

The destruction is directly linked to the military's scorched earth counterinsurgency policies. The notorious "four-cuts" doctrine, which has been employed in active war zones in ethnic areas for decades, is now being applied in urban areas in the fight against local militia groups such as People Defense Forces (PDFs) and EROs in many regions. The four cuts are designed to cut off food, funding, intelligence, and recruits for the resistance.

The impacts of [Operation 1027](#), an ongoing military offensive conducted by the Three Brotherhood Alliance (3BA) in northern Shan State, which took place on October 27, 2023, made historic gains for the armed resistance movement. However, it also put communities living in these areas in the crossfire.

In a concerted effort against the junta in northern Shan State, the Brotherhood Alliance, which includes the Arakan Army (AA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), reclaimed dozens of towns and strategic outposts.

The military suffered a humiliating defeat. Ammunition was seized, and its officers were detained. The operation's success showed unmatched evidence of the organized and strategic coordination and resources of the armed revolutionary movement. In violent retaliation, the junta has since responded aggressively.

Despite overwhelming evidence of the junta's war crimes, the military remains shielded from accountability. For at least 70 years, they have carried out violence against ethnic groups, primarily residing in the borderlands of Burma.

The junta has consistently targeted civilians with weapons supplied by countries like [China](#), [Russia](#), and [India](#), alongside advanced surveillance technology. The military is also using [fear-mongering tactics](#) disguised and weaponized through bureaucratic means such as the census and sham operations election.

Civil society organizations, ethnic health organizations (EHOs), and EROs are filling these critical gaps by working together and sharing resources and information. They are also jointly appealing to the donors and the international community, including United Nations agencies, for urgent action and support.

Local coordination and efforts have been critical for amplifying long-standing calls, which include a global arms embargo to immediately halt the supply of weapons to the military junta, which are being used to kill innocent civilians across the country.

More so, the weapons are being deliberately used to instill fear, incite terror, and instability. This is why it is so crucial for the international community to implement targeted sanctions on aviation fuel.

## Kachin State

In Kachin State, airstrikes by the military junta have heavily isolated communities across the northern region. The following are cases that occurred targeting women and children, who are often among the most displaced.

Over three days, the military [carried out deadly airstrikes in northern Shan and Kachin State](#). The bombardments killed twelve people between November 15 and November 17. Among the dead were eight children. The string of airstrikes began when a local Baptist church in a compound was attacked on 15 November in Kone Law village, Momauk Township. The junta dropped two bombs during the airstrike. Displaced residents were the origin of Hkuli village from Momauk township, who were taking refuge inside the church and seeking safety.



*Photo credit: The Kachin Women's Association Thailand  
Children injured by an airstrike by the junta on Kone Law village, Momauk township, Kachin State, on 15 November 2024*

Among the deceased were a 36-year-old man and a woman, as well as four boys and three girls aged between 4 and 13 years. Those wounded were a 50-year-old man, two women over 50 years old, a 27-year-old woman, five boys aged between 7 and 14, and two girls aged 2 and 18. The injured received medical treatment at Laiza General Hospital.





*Photo credit: The Kachin Women's Association Thailand*  
*Children injured by an airstrike by the junta on Kone Law village, Momauk township, Kachin State, on 15 November 2024*

On the 17th of November, an airstrike in Kutkai Town led to the destruction of several homes. A mother and her infant child were killed, and 13 others sustained injuries.

Based on the testimonies of local civilians, the military aircraft used in the attack regularly operates in the Bhamo and Momauk. The junta intentionally targeted civilians where no ground clashes had occurred.

On November 24, the junta once again attacked Waingmaw Township, Kachin State, from the air, [dropping seven bombs](#) on Namwar and Muk Chyik villages. The assault took place in the afternoon and injured one person while also damaging three homes. More indiscriminate attacks against civilian villages followed the airstrike despite no active conflict in the area. As a result, many of the villagers fled.

On November 26, in Waingmaw War Shaung village, the junta deployed an airstrike, destroying an [office building](#). ND-Burma member, the Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT), confirmed these cases in their documentation. Kachin civil society has repeatedly called for an end to the targeting of civilians.

## Shan and Karenni states

Throughout November, ND-Burma observed an alarming rise in attacks against communities in Shan State and along the Shan-Karenni border, where the junta has increased its presence and attacks against civilians. Several airstrikes took place in Pekon Township, located in southern Shan State, eastern Burma, near the border with Karenni State.

Many of these attacks took place without any prior conflict or provocation. With no weapons or means of defence against the relentless airstrikes and other assaults perpetrated, civilians were forced to suffer repeated and ongoing terror from the sky.

ND-Burma member, the Pa'O Youth Organization (PYO), reported several airstrikes in southern Shan State, including in Pinlaung Township, on November 2. There were also airstrikes in Hsi Hseng Town on November 8 and November 20, according to reports. However, there were no immediate injuries or deaths reported during these specific attacks.

The Ta'ang Students and Youth Union (TSYU), another ND-Burma member, reported airstrike incidents in northern Shan State. On November 1, in Kutkai, one individual was killed, and an airstrike destroyed three office buildings. TSYU confirmed a second case on the same day in Nawngkhio township, Hsammahse village, when the junta [deployed](#) an airstrike. Four civilians were killed, eight were injured, and many civilian houses were damaged in the attack.



Photo credit: The Ta'ang Students and Youth Union  
Destroyed houses as a result of the military's junta airstrike in Kutkai, Shan State, on 1 November 2024.



A resident who spoke to TSYU said:

*“The bombs landed inside the factory compound. Two workers and two factory security guards were killed, and others sustained various injuries. Since this morning, around 6 to 7 AM., we’ve heard gunfire from the Tawnghkam side. Yesterday, all day, we also heard the sounds of weapons coming from the direction of the current clashes near Ohnmathee Village.”*



*Photo credit: The Ta'ang Students and Youth Union*

*Destroyed houses as a result of the military's junta airstrike in Kutkai, Shan State, on 1 November 2024.*

On 30 October, the military also carried out consecutive airstrikes for two days on Hohko Village, where Burma Army soldiers were being detained. Sixteen soldiers were killed, and over 60 were injured as a result of the airstrikes.

There were additional reports of airstrikes by TSYU where Nawngkhio township was repeatedly targeted. On November 4th, the military junta carried out consecutive airstrikes on Nawngkhio township in Northern Shan State, which is under the control of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA). Moreover, they attacked the stationward in the downtown area of Nawngkhio that day. While there were no casualties, seven houses were damaged.



*Photo Credit: The Ta'ang Students and Youth Union*

*Photo: Destroyed houses caused by the military's junta airstrikes in Nawnghkio Township from 1 to 4 November 2024.*



The military junta also targets areas where civilians are resting peacefully. Soldiers [dropped a bomb](#) on the Lan San teashop, which is located in the Nawnghkio Myoma Market in the downtown area, at 2 PM on November 12. Eleven visitors were killed, and a further 11 were injured.

A resident said, *"The bomb hit the Lan San tea shop. Many passengers and drivers who were resting there were affected."*





*Photo credit: The Tàang Students and Youth Union*

*Civilians and first responders wrapped the body of a deceased individual who died after being killed in an airstrike on a local tea shop in Nawngkhio, Shan State on 12 November 2024.*



*Photo Credit: The Tàang Students and Youth Union*

*Shattered windows and building fragments in the aftermath of an airstrike on a local tea shop by the junta in Nawngkhio, Shan State.*

On the 13th, more airstrikes were confirmed by TSYU in Nawngkhio township, which [injured](#) four and destroyed more properties, including three houses, a court, and vehicles. One child was killed, and three others were injured due to an airstrike carried out by the military junta on Longsan Village in Nawngkhio Township on the evening of November 16.



Just days there, there was yet another attack on Nawngkhio Township on the 20th. Two civilians were killed, and five others were injured due to the airstrikes carried out by the military junta. The attacks took place at 3 PM. and again around midnight, targeting the villages of Kangyi and Konegyi.

A press statement from the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) reported that during daily airstrikes on Nawngkhio town from November 1st to 20th, seventeen civilians lost their lives, 26 were injured, and many houses were destroyed in November.

On November 8, two people were killed and one person was injured when the junta conducted at least ten [airstrikes](#) across four locations in Hpasawng Township, Karenni State. Less than two weeks later, the junta targeted the 'Bangkok IDP Camp' in Pekon Township with an airstrike, the second such attack on the camp since September. One woman was [killed](#), while two people were injured, and nearby infrastructure sustained considerable damage, including ten homes, a monastery, a paddy storage house, and a car.

In November, airstrikes throughout Pekon Township resulted in the [deaths of two women and one man](#), with five others injured. The lawlessness of the military junta is evident in their intentional attacks on civilians and local properties. Loikaw has also been repeatedly targeted.

On the 15th of November, a village in Moebye township was targeted in another airstrike, which [destroyed](#) three homes. On the 17th and 18th of November, northern Shan State continued to be targeted by military junta airstrikes.

On the 17th, in Kutkai township, a child and an adult were [killed](#) in an aerial bombardment, thirteen children were wounded, and houses were ruined in the aftermath. The same day, Kyukme township was [targeted](#) in Mongnaw Town and five adults were injured, with fifteen houses demolished in the airstrike. Then, on the 18th, once again in Kutkai, a junta airstrike [killed](#) a child and two adults and injured ten children. More homes were destroyed in the explosion.



*Photo credit: The Tàang Students and Youth Union  
A woman was injured by the military's junta airstrike on  
Mongnaw town, Kyaukme township, Shan State on 18  
November 2024.*

*Photo Credit: The Tàang Students and Youth Union  
A woman was injured by the military's junta airstrike on  
Mongnaw township, in Kyaukme township, Shan State, on  
18 November 2024.*





## Conclusion

As this briefing paper outlines, the cases documented by local and international media show that airstrikes have a long-lasting and devastating impact on innocent civilians. It is important to note that innocent communities continue to suffer the most.

Local people are forced to live in fear as their futures remain uncertain due to ongoing threats to their lives. Nationwide, the conflict and devastation caused by the junta have led to a lack of access to safe education, healthcare and work, as the military has not hesitated to deploy aerial attacks on local infrastructure.

Yet the courage and resilience of local people persist. In one recent but critical development, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) [filed](#) an application for an arrest warrant for Burma's military leader for crimes committed against the persecuted Rohingya minority group from attacks in 2017, [stating](#) that coup leader Min Aung Hlaing "bears criminal responsibility for the crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution of the Rohingya, committed in Myanmar, and in part in Bangladesh."

These efforts must go further to extend to the United Nations Security Council to impose a global arms embargo and targeted sanctions on the aviation fuel supply chain, which fuel the junta's campaign of terror to kill civilians from the air.

On December 21, 2022, the United Nations Security Council [adopted](#) Resolution 2669 (2022) on the situation in Burma with a vote of 12 in favour to none against and three abstentions (China, India, and the Russian Federation), which [includes](#) calls for an end to immediate violence. This included the necessity to uphold the rule of law and to respect human rights, stressing the necessity to protect the rights of women and children and the importance of accountability.



Civil society organizations have [repeatedly called](#) for protections and enforcement mechanisms that would deny the supply of weapons to the junta, including aviation fuel.

However, countries including China, Russia, and India have supported the military's attacks while simultaneously denying conflict-affected communities and IDPs the ability to seek asylum through safe and accessible pathways and legal protection. Neighbouring countries among ASEAN, such as Thailand and Cambodia, are aiding and abetting in the junta's impunity for not intervening to stop the violence.

Although there is much more justice to be done, the announcement of an application for an arrest warrant by the world's criminal court is significant because it signals that the military generals are not above international law. Min Aung Hlaing was directly responsible for the genocide perpetrated against the Rohingya people. As the junta leader today, he continues to dismiss and deny the fundamental human rights of civilians, particularly of ethnic and religious minorities.

We call for diplomatic, political and economic pressure on the military junta to cease the targeting of the civilian population in Burma immediately.



## Recommendations

### To the International Community

- ❖ Immediately refer the human rights situation in Burma to the International Criminal Court and further take action on all pathways to justice for victims and survivors of the military junta's mass atrocity crimes, including under universal jurisdiction.
- ❖ Impose and effectively enforce aviation fuel sanctions to deter the ongoing use of airstrikes by the military junta.
- ❖ Immediately adopt a UN Security Council resolution which acknowledges the worsening of the human rights crisis on the ground in Burma and impose a global arms embargo which would halt the free flow of weapons into the conflict-torn country.

- ❖ Support civil society organizations on the ground and respective human rights defenders by advancing documentation and evidence of mass crimes against humanity perpetrated by the military junta.
- ❖ Immediately dispatch a monitoring team to assess the human rights situation in Burma, particularly in conflict-affected areas.

### **To Donors**

- ❖ Work in equal partnership with and support locally led aid initiatives by civil society and community-based organizations, human rights defenders, and frontline responders to ensure the safe, effective, and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected areas.
- ❖ Provide long-term, flexible funding to ethnic humanitarian responders who are providing urgent emergency assistance to IDPs, including medical services to those who are wounded.
- ❖ Reduce rigorous funding applications, which disadvantage local organizations due to language and capacity constraints. Make funding models and avenues accessible in English and ethnic languages.
- ❖ Secure funding for documentation efforts to ensure the ongoing preservation and collection of human rights violations perpetrated by the junta and ensure accountability through international systems.

## To the National Unity Government

- ❖ Advocate for local organizations and the international community for locally led aid initiatives to be recognized and supported
- ❖ Encourage diplomats and world leaders to end existing relationships with the military junta and their affiliates to dismantle any credibility or recognition.
- ❖ Coordinate effectively and consistently with ethnic service providers, civil society organizations, and human rights defenders in Burma to align advocacy calls and areas of support from displaced communities.





## Organization Background

The Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND-Burma) consists of 13 organisations representing a range of ethnic nationalities, women, and former political prisoners. Since 2004, ND-Burma member organisations have been documenting human rights abuses and fighting for justice for victims. The network has nine full members and four affiliate members.